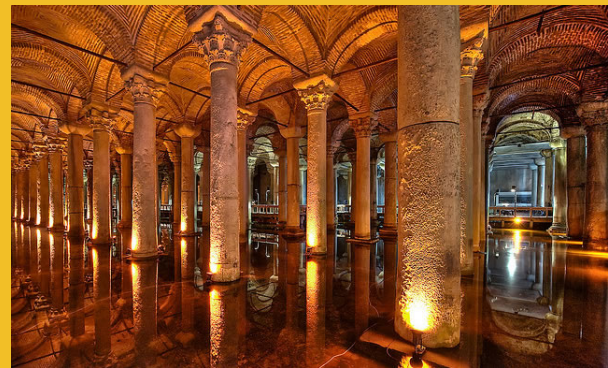


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Overview of Day 1

	LEAVE HOTEL	Tested and recommended hotels in Istanbul >	
	Take Tram Line T1 to Sultanahmet stop		
09:00-10:30	Hagia Sophia	Istanbul's most famous attraction	Page 5
	Take a walk to Sultanahmet Park		
10:30-11:00	Sultanahmet Park	Amazing view on Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque	Page 5
	Take a walk to Blue Mosque		
11:00-11:45	Blue Mosque	World-known landmark	Page 6
	Take Tram Line T1 from Sultanahmet stop to Sirkeci stop (Direction:Kabatas) - 25'		
12:10-12:55	Eminönü Neighborhood	Oldest neighborhood of Istanbul	Page 6
	Lunch time		
	Take a walk to Süleymaniye Mosque		
15:00-16:00	Süleymaniye Mosque	Second largest mosque in Istanbul	Page 7
	Take a walk to Beyazit Square - 25'		
16:25-16:40	Beyazit Square	Grand open space	Page 7
	Take a walk to Grand Bazaar - 10'		
16:50-17:50	Grand Bazaar	The world's oldest covered market	Page 7
	END OF DAY 1		

Overview of Day 1



Attraction Details

09:00-10:30

Hagia Sophia (Cankurtaran Mh., 34122 Istanbul)

Opening hours: Tue - Sun: 9:30am - 4:30pm, Mondays: Closed • **Admission:** 20 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya) is an awe-inspiring architecture in Istanbul. First it was built as an Orthodox cathedral, later became a mosque, today it is a museum
- It incorporated unique elements of both the Byzantine and Ottoman empires and their religions
- Hagia Sophia was constructed between 532 and 537. It was the largest cathedral of its time
- Hagia Sophia was the seat of the Patriarch of Constantinople (the "Orthodox Vatican") for almost a thousand years
- After 1453; Sultan Mehmed II converted the church into a mosque. Islamic elements (mihrab, minbar, four minarets) replaced Christian features (altar, bells, iconostasis)
- Hagia Sophia remained a mosque until 1931 when it was turned into a museum. Debates are still going on whether it should be a church, a mosque or a museum

- Having been the principal mosque of Istanbul, many Ottoman mosques, such as the Blue Mosque or the Süleymaniye Mosque, were modeled after Hagia Sophia
- Its name has nothing to do with the female name, Sophia. Sophia is the Latin phonetic spelling of the Greek word for wisdom

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Admire the impressive building from the outside
- Walk around in the former church and enjoy the stunning architecture
- Head up the stairs to the upper gallery for the splendid Byzantine mosaics

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Go early to avoid the crowds

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



10:30-11:00

Sultanahmet Park (Sultanahmet Square)

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Sultanahmet Park is a lovely park lying between Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia with a large fountain in the middle
- The park is an excellent place for picnic and relaxation. It provides a spectacular view of Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque, especially at night when they are lit up
- Milion, a tall marble column in the northern corner of the park, was 'point zero' in the Byzantine Empire. All distances were measured from here
- Hippodrome, built in the 3rd c. AD, was a Byzantine chariot racing stadium with a capacity of 100,000 people. Today it is a park-like square next to Sultanahmet Park
- Hippodrome or Sultan Ahmet Square features four monuments: (1) Serpent Column, (2) Obelisk of Thutmose III or Egyptian Obelisk, (3) Walled Obelisk, and (4) German Fountain
- Serpent Column was moved here from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Originally it was cast to commemorate the victory of the Greeks over the Persians during the 5th c. BC Persian Wars

- The Egyptian Obelisk was brought here from the Temple of Karnak in Luxor, Egypt to adorn the stadium
- The Walled Obelisk, built in 10th century, used to be covered with bronze. Troops of the Fourth Crusade removed the metal to make coins
- The German Fountain is a gift to Sultan Abdul Hamid from Kaiser Wilhelm II after his visit to Istanbul in 1898

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Have a rest on a bench near the beautiful fountain and just admire the two imposing Istanbul landmarks
- Walking along the Blue Mosque take a look at the Egyptian Obelisk, the Column of Constantine and the Serpentine Column

TIPS & INSIGHTS

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



Attraction Details

11:00-11:45



Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Mh., Tavukhane Sokak 5, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Daily: 9am - 6pm • Admission: Free

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Blue Mosque is a grandiose mosque in Istanbul. It was completed in 1616 and is considered the last imperial mosque of the city
- Sultan Ahmet I commissioned the building. His intention was to surpass both [Süleymaniye Mosque](#) and [Hagia Sophia](#)
- In an attempt to emphasize Islam's superiority over Christianity, the larger Blue Mosque was built opposite [Hagia Sophia](#) (a former Byzantine church) on the site of the Byzantine royal palace
- The architect's name was Mehmet Aga. He was a student of the Ottoman star architect Sinan
- Only two mosques have 6 minarets: the Blue Mosque and the central mosque of Mecca, the Islamic holy city. The latter now has 7 to emphasize its status
- Officially it is called Sultanahmet Camii (Mosque of Sultan Ahmet). The nickname 'Blue Mosque' was given because of the blue znik tiles that decorate its interior
- The central dome is 43 m (140 ft) high and 23,5 m (77 ft) in diameter. Over 20,000 blue tiles adorn its walls

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Admire the beautifully-arranged cascade of domes
- Non-worshippers are required to use the north entrance, off the Hippodrome
- Remove your shoes before entering. Put them in a plastic bag (available at the entrance). You can put the bag with the shoes on a shelf provided
- Admire the breathtaking interior decorated by masses of beautifully designed blue, green, yellow and red tiles
- Enjoy the special atmosphere

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Modest dress is required both for women and men
- It is considered polite for a woman to cover her head when entering a mosque. We recommend bringing your own scarf
- The mosque is impressively illuminated in the evening

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

12:10-12:55



Eminönü Neighborhood

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Eminönü neighborhood is located on the south side of the Golden Horn. It is the oldest part of Istanbul from where the city expanded
- The neighborhood has been a major transportation hub since Byzantine times and features some of the best known Istanbul attractions: [Spice Bazaar](#), [New Mosque](#), and [Rüstem Pasha Mosque](#)
- The impressive Sirkeci Train Station was built during the late Ottoman period. It is one of the termini of the famous Orient Express
- Other highlight is the grandiose Central Post Office also built during the late Ottoman era

- Eminönü is one of the busiest neighborhoods of Istanbul. It has only 55,000 residents but more than 2 million people come here daily

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Take a short walk in the old harbor, enjoying the stunning views
- Or just walk along the streets to the harbor enjoying the atmosphere

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Stop for a cup of authentic Turkish tea in one of the traditional tea houses

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

15:00-16:00

Süleymaniye Mosque (Süleymaniye Mh., Profesör Sıddık Sami Onar Caddesi 1, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Daily: 9am - 7pm • **Admission:** Free

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Süleymaniye Mosque is an imposing Ottoman imperial mosque. It is the second largest mosque in Istanbul
- The mosque is an epic symbol of the late Ottoman Empire's military might and imperial power
- It was built in 1550-57 for Sultan Süleyman I the Magnificent by Ottoman star architect, Mimar Sinan
- The building complex also includes a hamam (Turkish bath), medrese (Islamic school), a hospital and a caravanserai (inn for travelers and traders)
- The interior is simple, yet breathtaking. The huge central dome is 53 m (174 ft) high. 200 stained-glass windows decorate the mosque
- In 'addicts' alley' cafés used to serve opium and hashish along with tea and coffee

- Süleyman I and his wife Roxelana are entombed in the courtyard

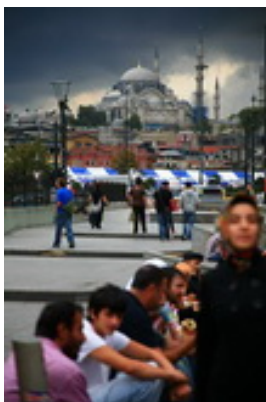
THINGS TO DO THERE

- Remove your shoes before entering. Put them in a plastic bag (available at the entrance) and carry the bag with you
- Enjoy the magnificent interior
- After leaving the mosque visit Süleyman I's tomb and rose gardens and explore the grounds

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Modest dress is required both for women and men
- It is considered polite for a woman to cover her head when entering a mosque. We recommend bringing your own scarf

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



16:25-16:40

Beyazit Square (Beyazit Square)

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Beyazit Square is a spacious square next to the Grand Bazaar. Officially it is called Hürriyet Meydanı, meaning "Freedom Square"
- The square used to be Istanbul's main meeting place for centuries. It stands on the site of the ancient Roman Forum Tauri
- The gate between two Turkish flags is the main entrance of the University of Istanbul. The university campus was built as the Ottoman War Ministry, hence its fortress-like appearance

- The mosque is called Bayezid II Mosque commissioned by Sultan Bayezid II. It was the second largest imperial mosque erected after the conquest of Constantinople

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Walking towards the Grand Bazaar take a look at the impressive Beyazit Mosque and Istanbul University's main gate

TIPS & INSIGHTS

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



16:50-17:50

Grand Bazaar (Mollafenari Mh., Ç. Nuruosmaniye Caddesi, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Mon - Sat: 9am - 7pm, Sundays: Closed

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Istanbul's Grand Bazaar is the world's oldest market and one of the world's largest buildings
- Sultan Mehmet II built the market soon after conquering Constantinople as the trading center of the Ottoman Empire. The bazaar was opened in 1461
- The traditional leather stores, spice and pottery shops, carpet, antique, and jewelry dealers are typical of the bazaar. Many shops nowadays sell souvenirs
- The market is one of the liveliest places of the city
- The bazaar in numbers: 307,000 m2 (3,30500 sq ft), 61 covered streets, 4,500 shops, 30,000 traders, between 250,000 and 500,000 daily visitors

- Besides the shops, it gives home to two mosques, two Turkish baths, fountains, multiple restaurants and cafés

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Have fun getting lost in the labyrinth of the bazaar
- Enjoy the lively atmosphere
- Shop for some food, spice, jewelry and clothes

TIPS & INSIGHTS

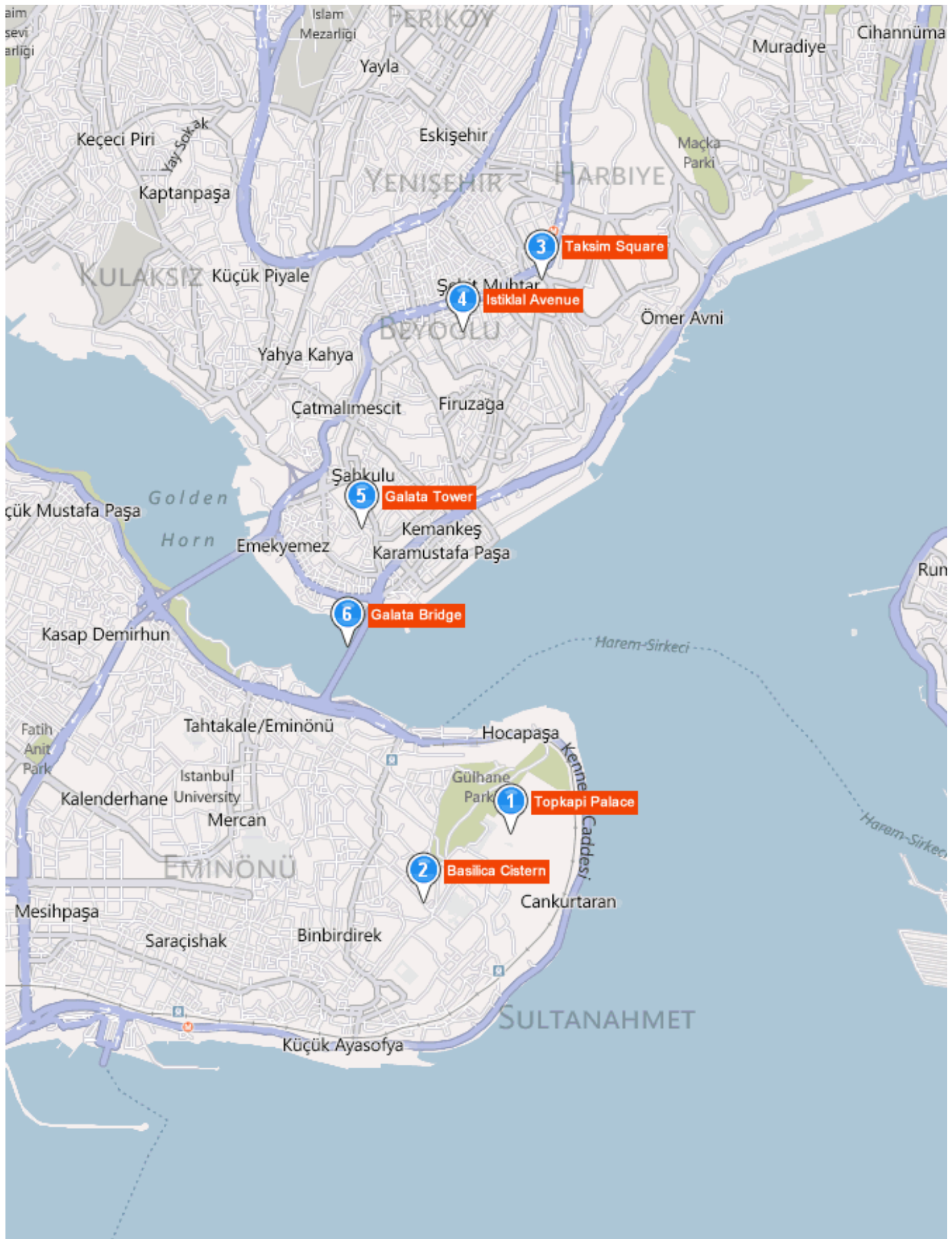
- Do not forget to do some bargaining if you want to buy a souvenir
- Great experience even for those who hate to shop

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



Overview of Day 2

	LEAVE HOTEL Tested and recommended hotels in Istanbul >		
	Take Tram Line T1 to Gülhane stop		
09:00-11:30	Topkapi Palace ▪	World heritage site	Page 10
	Take a walk to Basilica Cistern - 10'		
11:40-12:40	Basilica Cistern ▪	Istanbul's most unusual tourist attraction	Page 10
	Lunch time		
	Take Tram Line T1 to Kabatas stop (Direction: Kabatas)		
	Take the funicular from Kabatas to Taksim Square		
15:00-15:30	Taksim Square ▪	Popular meeting place	Page 11
	Take a walk to Istiklal Avenue		
15:30-16:30	Istiklal Avenue ▪	Exquisite pedestrian shopping street	Page 11
	Take a walk to Galata Tower - 15'		
16:45-17:45	Galata Tower ▪	The best 360° views of the city	Page 12
	Take a walk to Galata Bridge - 15'		
18:00-19:00	Galata Bridge ▪	Istanbul's great landmark	Page 12
	END OF DAY 2		



Attraction Details

09:00-11:30

Topkapi Palace (brahim Pa a Otelı, Binbirdirek Mh., Terzihane Sk 7, 34122 Istanbul)

Opening hours: Summer, Wed - Mon: 9am - 7pm, Winter, Wed - Mon: 9am - 5pm, Tuesdays: Closed • **Admission:** 20 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Topkapi Palace used to be the Ottoman Sultans' prime residence for almost 400 years. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985 and Istanbul's main tourist attraction
- Mehmet II built the palace in 1459-65 after conquering Constantinople. It served as the sultan's palace until Abdül Mecit I moved the court to Dolmabahçe Palace in 1853
- It was designed to resemble the tent encampments of nomadic Ottomans. It stands on Sarayburnu, a strategic point overlooking the Bosphorus
- Beside the sultan's residence the palace contained offices, the seat of government, a Harem and also a military training ground for Ottoman soldiers
- After the fall of the Ottoman Empire (1921), the government turned the Topkapi Palace in a museum of the imperial era in 1924
- The museum houses such invaluable treasures as the 86-carat Kasikci Diamond, the Topkapi Dagger, prophet Muhammad's cloak and sword. Collection of porcelain, robes, military equipments and Ottoman art pieces are also on display



THINGS TO DO THERE

- Enter the outer Topkapı complex for free
- Admire the ceremonial gates and the traditional fountains
- After buying the ticket, you'll enter the inner complex of the palace (the "Museum") and visit several increasingly intimate courtyards, housing the palace kitchens, council chamber, armory, treasury, and tulip garden
- Do not miss the Harem. You'll need to buy a separate ticket from the Harem's ticket booth (in front of the Harem entrance)

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Accepting only Turkish Lira and Credit Card as payment
- The Kitchens, The Section of Arms and The Library of Manuscripts are closed to visit due to renovation
- Stop for a cup of tea in the restaurant and enjoy the stunning view overlooking the Bosphorus
- The Harem is well worth the extra charge

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

11:40-12:40

Basilica Cistern (13 Yerebatan Caddesi, Sultanahmet)

Opening hours: Daily: 9am - 6:30pm • **Admission:** 10 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Basilica Cistern used to be the city's largest underground water reservoir in Byzantine times. It was built in the 6th century by Byzantine Emperor Justinian
- Its purpose was to ensure the city's water supply even in time of droughts and sieges. Water came here via clay pipes and aqueducts from Belgrade forest (12 km away)
- The cistern covers 9,800 m² (11,720 sq yards), more than 2 football fields, and has a capacity of 80 million liters (18 million gallons)
- The cistern was built on the site of a former Basilica, hence its name. Turks call it: Yerebatan Sarayı meaning 'Sunken Palace'
- 336 pillars (8 m (26 ft) high each) that were reused from earlier Roman ruins, hold up the roof. This explains why the tops of the columns are so different



- The "palace" features two Medusa (terrifying female creature in Greek mythology) heads at the far end
- Before the walking platforms were built visitors had to rent boats to traverse it

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Walk along the designated walkways lit with glowing red lights and enjoy the ethereal atmosphere and the breathtaking atmosphere
- Listen to the nice classical music accompanying the sound of endlessly dripping water nad enjoy the relaxing atmosphere
- Make sure to walk the decks to see the Medusa Heads

TIPS & INSIGHTS

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

15:00-15:30

Taksim Square (Taksim Square)



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Taksim Square is the main square of Istanbul's New Districts. It lies on the east end of the busy shopping street, Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue)
- It is one of the termini of the nostalgic train that runs along Independence Avenue. The line ends at The Tunnel (Tünel), Europe's second oldest (1875) subway station
- The square's name derives from Arabic meaning 'division' or 'distribution'. The city's main water line, built by Sultan Mahmud I in 1732, ended here and branched off to other parts of the city
- The stone reservoir is still in place and can be found on the southern side of the square
- Monument of Independence shows Atatürk and other revolutionary heroes. It was erected in 1928 to commemorate the victory of the Turkish Independence War

- Travel agencies, restaurants, cafés and pubs surround the square along with some of Istanbul's most luxurious hotels, such as InterContinental, and the Ritz-Carlton
- The square is the venue of many public events such as concerts and parades, New Year Celebrations and other social happenings

THINGS TO DO THERE

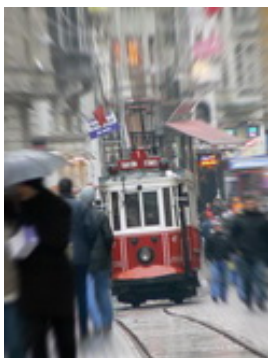
- Start your visit at the memorial to see the statue of Atatürk and his soldiers, representing the War of Independence
- Take a rest in one of the restaurants before exploring the busy pedestrian street, Istiklal Caddesi

TIPS & INSIGHTS

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

15:30-16:30

Istiklal Avenue (Istiklal Caddesi)



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue) is an elegant pedestrian shopping street in Istanbul's New Districts. More than 3 million people visit the street daily
- During the day it is filled with shoppers, in the night it becomes the center of the city's nightlife
- It houses boutiques, music and bookstores, traditional bakeries, chocolateries, art galleries, cinemas, theaters, cafés, pubs, restaurants and night clubs with live music
- The avenue was built in 1870 after a devastating fire. The area was rebuilt as a showcase of Art Nouveau Style
- The street's name commemorates the triumph of the Turkish War of Independence and the declaration of the Turkish Republic
- Highlights include: historic tram line; the Tunnel (or Tünel, the second oldest subway station in Europe), St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church, Flower Passage, the fish market, and Aya Triada Greek Orthodox Church

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Walk along this elegant pedestrian street and enjoy the special atmosphere, the mix of sounds and smells

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- If you walk up from Galatasaray Square it is recommended to take the Tünel
- It is a great spot for a nice evening or night walk
- Be prepared that it is always crowded

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

Attraction Details

16:45-17:45

Galata Tower (Bereketzade Mh., 34420 Istanbul)**Opening hours:** Summer, daily: 9am - 7pm, Otherwise, daily: 9am - 5pm • **Admission:** 10 TL**THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW**

- Galata Tower is a 62 m (205 ft) high, medieval stone tower with a conical top. It provides the best 360° views of Istanbul
- The Genoese built the tower in 1348 and called it 'Christea Turris' (Latin for Tower of Christ). It was part of the fortifications surrounding the citadel of Galata
- The Genoese were the main trading partner of Constantinople. The city of Galata was their trade colony
- According to travel stories (called Seyahatname), Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi, a 17th century aviator, overflowed the Bosphorus from Galata Tower using artificial wings for gliding
- From the 18th century Ottoman Turks used the tower for spotting fires in the city
- After a storm destroyed the tower's conic roof in 1875, Galata Tower remained without a top until the 1960's



- The tower was opened to the public in 1967

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Admire the tower from outside
- Take the elevator and a small set of narrow, winding stairs. They will take you to the restaurant and the viewing platform
- Walk around the gallery and enjoy the fabulous views of the Golden Horn and the city

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Time your visit for sunset, if possible
- If you don't fancy walking to the tower, take the Tunnel (the old subway) uphill from Karaköy to Tünel
- In the evenings, the restaurant hosts a dinner and cabaret with Turkish folk dance and belly dancing

[**MORE Info and Photos >**](#)

18:00-19:00

Galata Bridge**THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW**

- Galata Bridge is a two-level concrete bridge that spans Bosphorus at the Golden Horn
- The original Galata Bridge, the first bridge spanning the Golden Horn, was built in the early 20th century
- After the old historic bridge became insufficient for modern traffic, the current Galata Bridge was built in 1994
- The lower level of the bridge is lined with restaurants and cafés. The upper level offers sweeping panoramic views of Istanbul's old town, especially breathtaking in sunset
- Hundreds of fishermen stand along the railing trying to catch the biggest fish of the day
- Leonardo da Vinci designed a revolutionary new bridge in 1502 for Galata Bridge's current location. If built, it would have been the longest bridge of its time

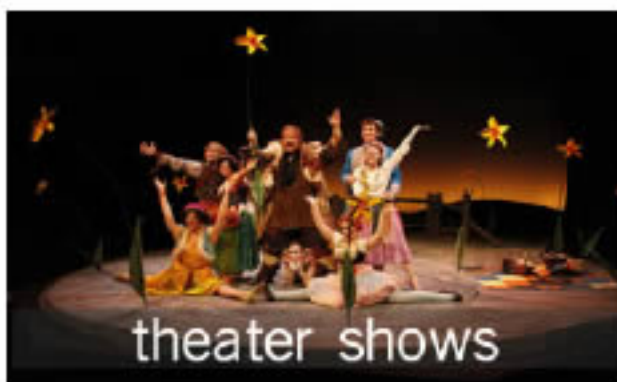
**THINGS TO DO THERE**

- Walk all along the bridge
- On the upper deck watch the row of fishermen cast lines, peering optimistically into murky waters below
- Enjoy the excellent view across the city, the Golden Horn and ships
- Have a rest in one of the cafés of the lower level

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- The restaurants in the lower level of the bridge tend to be overpriced

[**MORE Info and Photos >**](#)



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Overview of Day 3

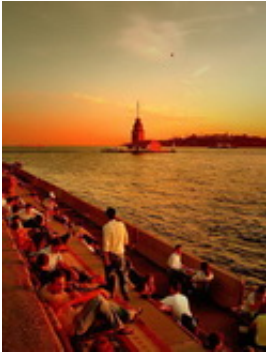
	LEAVE HOTEL Tested and recommended hotels in Istanbul >		
	Take the ferry from Eminönü to Üsküdar - 20'		
10:00-11:00	Üsküdar Neighborhood ▪	A taste of Asia	Page 16
	Take the ferry from Üsküdar to Kabatas		
	Take a walk to Dolmabahçe Palace - 30' in all		
11:30-14:00	Dolmabahçe Palace ▪	One of the most glamorous palaces in the world	Page 17
	Lunch time		
	Take bus nr. 22 from Kabatas stop to Kabatas Lisesi stop (Direction: Istinye Dereici)		
16:00-17:30	Ortaköy Neighborhood ▪	Charming waterfront area	Page 18
	END OF DAY 3		



Attraction Details

10:00-11:00

Üsküdar Neighborhood



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Üsküdar is a charming and predominantly residential neighborhood on Istanbul's Asian side. Its difference from the European side surprises most first-time visitors
- Üsküdar has a different style of architecture and a more relaxed atmosphere
- The Greeks founded the settlement, Chrysopolis or 'City of Gold', in the 7th c. BC. It was an important staging point in the Greek-Persian war of 410 BC
- Before Ottomans finally conquered Constantinople in 1453, they had already been ruling Üsküdar for a 100 years
- Üsküdar features a large number of historical mosques such as Mihrimah Sultan Mosque built by Ottoman star architect Sinan in 1548
- Leander's Tower (Kız Kulesi), a tower on tiny island off the coast of Üsküdar was originally built by the Greeks to control the movements of Persian ships. Both Byzantines and Ottomans used, rebuilt and modified the tower

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Explore the streets and some mosques in this quiet neighborhood
- Take a pleasant waterfront walk to see Leander's Tower

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- The area behind the ferry dock is a busy shopping district, with many restaurants (including the well-known Kanaat Lokantasi serving Ottoman cuisine) and a number of important Ottoman mosques
- You can take a ferry from the waterfront to get to Leander's Tower

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

11:30-14:00

Dolmabahçe Palace (Vi nezade Mh., 34357 Istanbul)

Opening hours: Tue, Wed, Fri - Sun: 9am - 4pm, Mon, Thurs: Closed • **Admission:** 20 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Dolmabahçe Palace, one of the world's most opulent palaces and the largest in Turkey, was the royal residence of the last 6 sultans of the Ottoman Empire
- Abdül Mecid I built the palace in 1843-56. The former 13th century royal palace, Topkapı, lacked the up-to-date luxury
- The design of the new building attests to increasing European influence. It mixes elements of modern European styles (Baroque, Rococo and Neoclassicism) with traditional Turkish architecture and lifestyle
- It cost 5 million Ottoman golden coins (equaling 35 tonnes of gold) to erect the castle. 14 tonnes of gold was used for gilding the ceilings
- The palace has an area of 45,000m² (11.2 ac), 285 rooms, 46 halls, 6 baths and 68 toilets
- One of the world's largest crystal chandelier, a gift of Queen Victoria of England, hangs in the central hall. It contains 750 lamps and weighs 4,5 tonnes
- Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, turned the palace into a presidential residence in 1924
- He died in the palace at 9:05 AM on 10th November 1938. As a matter of respect all clocks in the palace were stopped at this time

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Decide which parts of the palace you want to visit. We recommend that you do not miss the Selamlık (administrative wings). This guided tour takes approximately 90 minutes
- If you have the time you can also visit the Harem. This separate guided tour takes 45 minutes
- Buy your entrance ticket(s) at the main entrance gate
- Walk through the palace's well-maintained garden, with a small pool flanked by lion statues
- Take a look at the magnificent ceremonial land gate
- Follow your guide on the guided tour of the administrative wings
- Take your time to enjoy the garden and the view of the Bosphorus

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- All visits are guided and you can visit the palace only in groups (due to security reasons). Tours start about every 15 minutes
- It is strictly forbidden to take photos and videos inside the palace

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



Attraction Details

16:00-17:30

Ortaköy Neighborhood



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Istanbul's Ortaköy district used to be a romantic fishing village. Today it is an affluent waterfront neighborhood located in the middle of Bosphorus' European bank
- The neighborhood was a cosmopolitan area both during the Byzantine and Ottoman era. Turks, Jews, Greeks and Americans lived here
- With many art galleries, night clubs, cafés, bars, and restaurants the district is hugely popular on weekends both among locals and tourists
- One of the oldest buildings of Ortaköy is the nearly 500-year old Turkish bath. It was built by Ottoman star architect Mimar Sinan in 1556
- The Ortaköy Mosque is a beautifully ornamented Neo-Baroque style mosque. It was built in the 18th c, but only received its current ornate look in the middle of 19th c.
- The Çıra an Palace was built in 1871 by Sultan Abdülaziz as his residence. Until a fire severely damaged the building in 1910 the palace served as the Ottoman Parliament. Today it is one of Istanbul's most luxurious hotels
- The once famous cosmopolitan population is gone. The riot of 1955 had a major impact when, after a bombing of a Turkish consulate in Greece, a Turkish mob assaulted the Greek minority of Ortaköy and killed over a dozen people

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Take a walk and explore this popular neighborhood
- On Sundays, shop for hats, hand-made jewelry and old books at the open-air market
- Do not miss the tiny Ortaköy Camii perched on a promontory over the Bosphorus
- Look out for the beautiful bell tower of Ayios Fokas Rum's (16 Muallim Hacı Cad), a Greek Orthodox church previously central to the area's once-large Greek community
- If you have the time go on a boat tour that will take you around the Bosphorus area

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- It is a popular spot for locals and tourists alike, with its art galleries, night clubs, cafés, bars, and restaurants
- At night, the lights on the mighty Bosphorus Bridge change color, graceful without being kitsch

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

Overview of Day 4

	LEAVE HOTEL	Tested and recommended hotels in Istanbul >	
	Take Tram Line T1 to Gülhane stop		
09:00-11:30	Archaeology Museum	Vast collection of beautiful artworks	Page 21
	Take Tram Line T1 from Gülhane stop to Eminönü stop (Direction:Kabatas) - 15'		
11:45-12:35	Spice Bazaar	Delight to the senses	Page 21
	Take a walk to New Mosque - 10'		
12:45-13:15	New Mosque	Dominates the Old City skyline	Page 22
	Lunch time		
	Take a walk to Rüstem Pasha Mosque		
15:00-15:30	Rüstem Pasha Mosque	Enchanting mosque	Page 22
	Take a walk to Süleymaniye Hamam - 30'		
16:00-17:30	Süleymaniye Hamam	Relaxing experience	Page 23
	END OF DAY 4		

Overview of Day 4



Attraction Details

09:00-11:30

Archaeology Museum (Alemdar Cad. Osman Hamdi Bey Yokuşu Sk, 34122 Istanbul)

Opening hours: Tue - Sun: 9am - 5pm, Mondays: Closed • **Admission:** 10 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Istanbul Archaeology Museum is a world class museum right next to Topkapi Palace
- It is made up of three museums: (1) Archaeological Museum, (2) Museum of the Ancient Orient, (3) Museum of Islamic Art
- The collection includes more than one million objects and spans about 5000 years
- Osman Hamdi Bey established the museum in 1881 to prevent European archaeologists and treasure-hunters from taking away the countries historical finds
- The Museum of Archaeology exhibits Greek and Roman finds and that of early Istanbul civilizations. Highlights are the Alexander Sarcophagus and the Sarcophagus of the Crying Women
- The Museum of the Ancient Orient features finds of more ancient civilizations, such as the world's oldest written peace agreement, the 13th c. BC Kadesh Treaty between Ramesses II of Egypt and Hattusili III of the Hittite Empire
- The Museum of Islamic Art (Tiled Kiosk) shows off beautiful Islamic ceramics and tiles

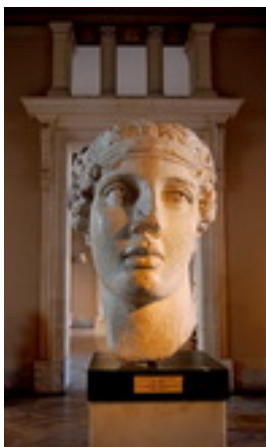
THINGS TO DO THERE

- As the museum has an extensive collection we recommend visiting the highlights
- In the main building do not miss Alexander Sarcophagus, the gallery of statues (several rooms), sarcophagus of the Crying Women, Busts of Alexander, Zeus with many more old age funerary tombs
- The highlights of the Ancient Orient section include the Tablet archives, Arabic, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Anatolian art displays
- The tiled kiosk of the Museum of Islamic Art itself is beautiful with external mosaic tiling, and lovely inside architecture. It contains ceramics, chinaware objects and art spread over several rooms

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Take a breather in the charming courtyard café where you can have tea and ice-cream alongside cats and broken tombstones

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



11:45-12:35

Spice Bazaar (Rüstem Paşa Mh, 34116 Istanbul)

Opening hours: Mon - Sat: 9am - 7pm, Sundays: Closed

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Egypt or Spice Market is a large covered shopping complex in Istanbul's Eminönü neighborhood. It is part of the New Mosque building complex
- It was built in 1660 to help finance the mosque's construction and its maintenance
- The name of the market derives from the fact that, once, spice imported from Egypt was the main commodity sold here
- Nowadays the market has shifted towards satisfying the tourist trade selling goods such as small souvenirs, T-Shirts, pistachios and almonds, coffee and tea or Belly-dancing outfits
- Stalls running along the outside walls still sell spices. The spice market remained the center of the spice trade in Istanbul
- The building has an "L"-shape and holds 88 vaulted rooms. It is the second largest shopping complex in Istanbul after the Grand Bazaar

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Just walking past all the shops with their many nuts, dried fruits, teas, candies and spices is a pure delight
- Bargain hunting is the key as most items are offered initially for 15-50% more
- Try some candied chestnuts. They are traditional Turkish sweets

TIPS & INSIGHTS

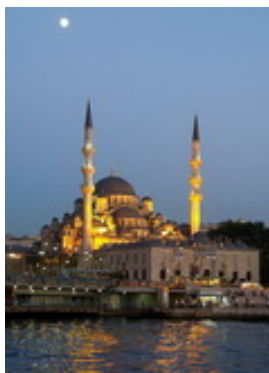
- It's a lot smaller than the Grand Bazaar, but you will find it more pleasant
- The merchants usually are less aggressive and more amicable
- We recommend not buying the 8in1 or 12in1 tea packs. They are of very poor quality

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



Attraction Details

12:45-13:15

**New Mosque** (Eminönü, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Daily: Dawn - Dusk • Admission: Free

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- New Mosque is a large, classical, traditional-style Ottoman imperial mosque in Istanbul's Eminönü district
- It was commissioned in 1597 by the mother queen, Valide Safiye Sultan, mother of Mehmed III
- Later the construction was halted. First the architect was executed for heresy, later Safiye was expelled after her son's death
- The mosque was finished in 1663 under the patronage of Turhan Hatice Sultan, mother of Mehmet IV
- The interior is rather gloomy. It is dominated by a multi-domed ceiling. Blue and turquoise Iznik tiles richly decorate the walls
- Valide Sultan Turhan Hatice is entombed here along with 6 sultans and many princes and princesses
- The spice market was originally built to finance the construction of the New Mosque

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Admire the traditional architecture of the mosque
- Remove your shoes before entering. Put them on a shelf provided
- Enjoy the impressive interior decorated with Iznik tiles, gold and marble

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Modest dress is required both for women and men
- It is considered polite for a woman to cover her head when entering a mosque. We recommend bringing your own scarf
- The mosque is impressively illuminated in the evening
- It is less crowded than the [Blue Mosque](#)
- It is best to avoid prayer times

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

15:00-15:30

**Rüstem Pasha Mosque** (Hasircılar Carsisi-Eminönü, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Daily: Dawn - Dusk • Admission: Free

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Rüstem Pasha Mosque is one of the most beautiful mosques in Istanbul's Eminönü quarter
- It was built in 1561-63 by Princess Mihrimah in memory of her husband, Rüstem Pasha. Princess Mihrimah was the daughter of Süleyman the Magnificent
- Rüstem Pasha was an Ottoman General and statesman. He was Süleyman's Grand Vizier (greatest minister of the Sultan with absolute power of attorney)
- This mosque is famous for the lavish use of Iznik tiles. Large quantity of tiles decorates its walls with a wide variety of geometrical and pretty floral patterns
- The beautiful potted plants in the courtyard make the place especially enchanting
- The row of workshops below the mosque was built up to help finance the construction of the temple
- The architect was Ottoman imperial architect, Mimar Sinan. Like many other mosques, its design was inspired by [Hagia Sophia](#)

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Admire the enchanting mosque from the outside
- Remove your shoes before entering. Put them on a shelf provided
- Enjoy the impressive interior decorated with the famous blue Iznik tiles

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- Modest dress is required both for women and men
- It is considered polite for a woman to cover her head when entering a mosque. We recommend bringing your own scarf
- The mosque is impressively illuminated in the evening

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)

16:00-17:30

Süleymaniye Hamam (20 Mimar Sinan Caddesi, Süleymaniye)

Opening hours: Daily: 10am - 12midnight • **Admission:** 35

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Süleymaniye Hamam is a Turkish Bath that is part of the beautiful Süleymaniye Mosque complex
- Being operational since 1550, it is the oldest hamam in Istanbul. The building was designed by Ottoman star architect Sinan
- It specializes in couples and families. It employs a friendly, helpful and highly professional staff
- The entire hamam experience lasts 90 minutes. The service includes the hot room, washing, peeling (scrubbing), and a soap massage
- The experience feels like going back to the Ottoman times
- This hamam is out-of-the-way meaning fewer tourists. It is busier late afternoon and in the evening
- The scrubbing and massage can hurt occasionally but it feels wonderful afterwards

THINGS TO DO THERE

- First enjoy the hot room where you will lie on a hot marble slab in the center of the room for about 40 minutes
- After that you will have a body exfoliation followed by a soap massage and washing service
- You will be dried off in a specialized way
- You can rest in another room to relax and enjoy a drink (extra charge)

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- The hamam is suitable for families and couples only. Single males or females will not be admitted
- Only cash is accepted

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)





Don't know which hotel to book?

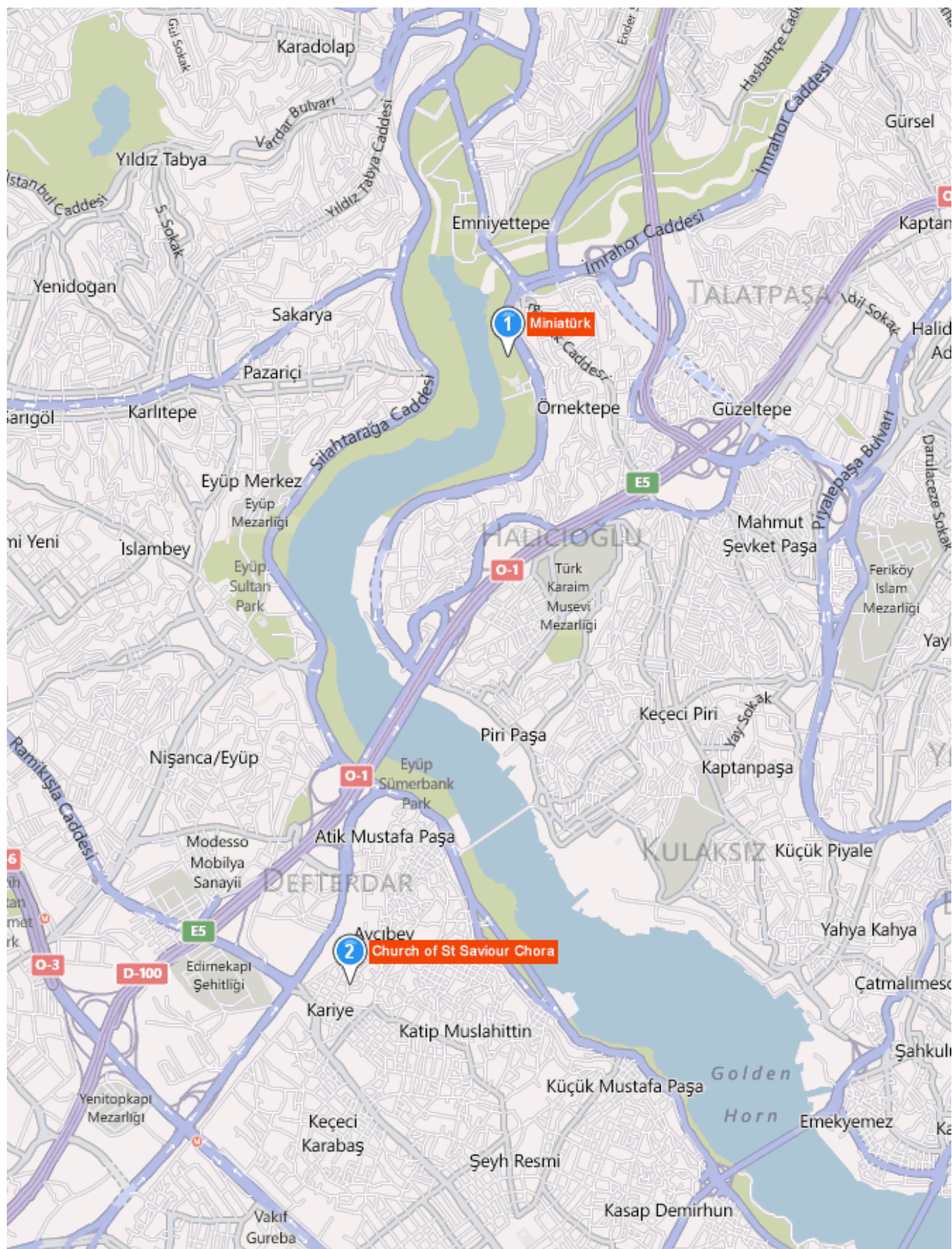
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Overview of Day 5

	LEAVE HOTEL Tested and recommended hotels in Istanbul > From Eminönü take bus nr. 47, 47E or 47C to Miniaturk stop (Direction: Yesilpinar)	
10:00-12:00	Miniaturk —————	Turkey's best landmarks in miniature size Page 27
	Take bus nr. 47, 47E or 47C from Miniaturk stop to Eminönü (Direction: Eminönü) Lunch time Take bus nr. 32 from Eminönü stop to Edirnekapi stop (Direction: Cevatpasa)	
15:30-16:30	Church of St Saviour Chora —————	Beautiful frescoes and mosaics Page 27
	END OF DAY 5	

Overview of Day 5



Attraction Details

10:00-12:00

Miniatürk (mrahor Caddesi 90, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Weekdays: 9am - 7pm, Weekends: 9am - 8pm • **Admission:** 10 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Miniatürk, a beautiful outdoor museum and park, displays Turkey's most important buildings in miniature size (1:25 scale)
- There are 120 models categorized in three sections: (1) Anatolia, (2) Istanbul and (3) the former Ottoman territories
- Models recreate such attractions as [Dolmabahçe Palace](#), [Blue Mosque](#), [Galata Tower](#), [Hagia Sophia](#), Bosphorus Bridge or the Temple of Artemis
- The miniatures are made of industrial strength plastic-based material to withstand the elements
- The museum traces a 3000-year history

- Other features of the park include a miniature railway, model cars and boats, a cinema, an indoor exhibition hall, and a playground; ideal for kids
- With an area of 60,000 m2, Miniatürk is the largest miniature park in the world

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Walk around the open area and explore Istanbul's and Turkey's most important and impressive landmarks

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- It is a must-visit for families with kids

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)



15:30-16:30

Church of St Saviour Chora (Avcıbey Mh., Kariye Türbesi Sokak 16, Istanbul)

Opening hours: Thurs - Tues: 9am - 4:30pm, Wednesdays: Closed • **Admission:** 10 TL

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Church of St Saviour Chora is a secularized museum in Istanbul since 1948
- Originally it was built as a Byzantine church in the 11th century. It is considered to be one of the most beautiful examples of Byzantine churches
- The world class interior decorations were added in the middle of the 14th century. They are considered to be the finest example of Byzantine art
- More than 100 mosaics and frescoes decorate the walls. They are illustrating scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary and depict other Biblical images
- When the church was converted into a mosque in 1511, the frescoes and mosaics were plastered over. This helped preserve these masterpieces

THINGS TO DO THERE

- Walk around and enjoy the more than 50 fabulous mosaic panels dating from about 1310, most in excellent shape
- Do not miss the garden behind the church

TIPS & INSIGHTS

- As the frescoes are very fragile no flash photography is permitted
- Byzantine city walls
- If you are in a hurry we recommend taking a taxi to get to Church of St Saviour Chora

[MORE Info and Photos >](#)





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Map

<http://www.bing.com/maps>

Attraction details

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